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ABSTRACT

This guide details the core competencies for early care and education professionals in Kansas and Missouri. The guide's introduction provides background information about what core competencies are, why they are important, and how they can be used by practitioners, directors, trainers, higher education faculty, agencies, and professional development programs. The core competencies in eight content areas are delineated: (1) child growth and development; (2) learning environment and curriculum; (3) child observation and assessment; (4) families and communities; (5) health, safety, and nutrition; (6) interactions with children; (7) program planning and development; and (8) professional development and leadership. Each of the eight content areas contains five levels that range from the skills and knowledge of a beginning professional to the more advanced skills and knowledge possessed by someone with a master's degree. The core competencies are designed as a framework for improving teaching and learning. The guide concludes with a professional development record form for teachers/caregivers to document their professional development activities. (KB)

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Core Competencies

for Early Care and Education Professionals in Kansas and Missouri

What professionals who work with young children and families need to know and are able to do to provide quality early care and education

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Welcome!

This is the first edition of the Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals in Kansas and Missouri. Many professionals from across the two states worked together to write the core competencies. Inside, you will find an introduction that provides background information about what core competencies are and why they are important. Following the introduction are the core competencies themselves. They are divided into eight content areas, colored coded in this document for easy use. Each of the eight areas contains five levels that range from the skills and knowledge that a beginning professional has to the more advanced skills and knowledge possessed by someone with a master's degree.

The core competencies can serve as a guide for improving teaching and learning. You will notice that each competency can be either measured or demonstrated. You may also find that the core competencies contain new ideas or provide a new way of reflecting on your teaching.

The core competencies are a practical, useable and living document. We hope that we have included enough detail so instructors can use it and new professionals and students can understand it. Note the convenient checkbox for self-assessment. A section for recording training and education has been included.

We hope that you find the core competencies meet your needs as an early care and education professional.

If you have questions or would like additional copies, please contact either the Metropolitan Council on Child Care at the Mid-America Regional Council (816/474-4240) or the Professional Development Initiative for Early Care and Education in Kansas at the Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (800/678-2548).

Greater Kansas City Careers in Early Childhood Care and Education

Opportunities in a Professional Education Network in Missouri (OPEN)

Professional Development Initiative for Early Care and Education in Kansas (PDI)

Early childhood professionals from Kansas and Missouri developed the Bi-State Core Competencies with support from the following organizations and agencies: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Danforth Foundation, Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education/ Wheelock College, Metropolitan Council on Child Care/Mid-America Regional Council, Project Construct National Center/University of Missouri- Columbia, Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services.

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Reasons why core competencies are critical to the field

- ☐ Core competencies define what professionals need to know and be able to do to provide quality care and education.
- ☐ Core competencies serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by professionals in all settings and programs.
- ☐ Core competencies establish a set of standards for care and education that support the professionalization of the field.

Different ways core competencies may be used

Providers, Practitions, Teachers	☐ Assess level of knowledge and skill in each of the eight content areas. ☐ Identify specific areas of need for future professional development (e.g., training/education)
Directors, Program Administrators	☐ Specify training/education requirements for staff job descriptions ☐ Develop staff training/education plans and policies ☐ Establish a salary scale based on levels of competency the staff achieves
Trainers, Training Organizations	☐ Plan and organize training/education ☐ Promote training/education opportunities
Higher Education Faculty, Staff, and Administrators	☐ Coordinate and design course content to facilitate transfer and articulate agreements ☐ Assess current program content to determine course development
Federal, State, and Local Agencies	☐ Develop and implement policies that will enhance professionalism in the field
Professional Development Efforts (e.g., PDI, OPEN, Greater Kansas City Careers)	☐ Create the framework for a career-development system that allows professionals to achieve recognition in the field, provides access to competency-based training/education, and ensures compensation commensurate with training/education

The Bi-State Core Competencies are organized by content areas and levels

Content areas

The areas of competency correspond with traditional curricular areas in early childhood care and education, and, therefore, address the development and learning of the "whole" professional. Each content area describes the knowledge and skills professionals need in order to work with children birth through age eight and their families. Professionals increase their knowledge and skills in the content areas through ongoing training/education.

Each content area specifies ways in which professionals fully include children from many ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds. The content areas also address children with special needs in the early care and education setting.

Core Content Areas

- I. Child Growth and Development: understand how children acquire language and creative expression and develop physically, cognitively, and socially.
- II. Learning Environment and Curriculum: establish an environment that provides learning experiences that meet each child's needs, capabilities, and interests.
- III. Child Observation and Assessment: observe and assess what children know and can do in order to provide curriculum that meets their developmental and learning needs.
- IV. Families and Communities: work collaboratively with families and agencies/organizations to meet children's needs and to encourage the community's involvement with early care and education.
- V. Health, Safety, and Nutrition: establish and maintain an environment that ensures children's healthy development, safety, and nourishment.
- VI. Interactions with Children: establish supportive relationships with children and guide them as individuals and as a part of a group.
- VII. Program Planning and Development: establish, implement, and evaluate an early care and education program.
- VIII. Professional Development and Leadership: serve children and families in a professional manner and participate in the community as a representative of early childhood care and education.

The core competencies provide a framework of the knowledge and skills for each of the five levels of professional preparation; however, they are not exhaustive. Some competencies reflected in the content areas require professionals to perform specific actions, while others suggest areas for continued growth and knowledge. Moreover, professionals may find that satisfying some competencies requires further training/education.

Levels

The levels of competency establish a continuum from the preliminary skills necessary to enter the field to an advanced level of academic preparation and varied experience. Professionals progress from one level to another through a combination of formal study and reflection on practice. Depending on the professional's role, setting, or experience, she or he may have skills at varying levels in the different areas.

The five levels are intended to be cumulative. For example, a professional working at Level 3 has knowledge and skills to meet the competencies at Levels 1, 2, and 3. At all levels, adults who care for and educate young children continue their participation in professional development activities and increase their knowledge and skills within each of the content areas.

- Level 1 includes the knowledge and skills expected of a professional new to the early care and education field, with minimal specialized training/education.
- Level 2 includes level 1 plus the knowledge and skills commensurate with a Child Development Associate credential, a certificate in child development, or equivalent training/education.
- Level 3 includes levels 1 and 2 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- Level 4 includes levels 1, 2, and 3 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development.
- Level 5 includes levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 plus knowledge and skills commensurate with an advanced degree in early childhood education or child development.

Early care and education professionals become increasingly specialized as they achieve higher levels of formal education. Therefore, these professionals are expected to demonstrate a general set of competencies with a specific area of specialization. In addition, these professionals are expected to assume a leadership role in the field, collaborating with other professions to promote awareness about early childhood care and education.

The Bi-State Core Competencies were developed in response to research findings

- ☐ There is a direct relationship between professionals' level of training and quality of work with children, especially in terms of the effect on children's language development, social skills, and learning (Whitebrook, 1989).
- ☐ Research suggests that over 90% of brain development occurs before age three. Early care and education professionals, along with families, have a significant opportunity to enhance young children's social and emotional development, attention, processing, memory, and retention (Shore, 1997).
- ☐ A recent study showed that 86% of Missouri's early care and education workforce agrees that training and education are necessary before a person starts to care for children (Gable, 1998).

The Bi-State Core Competencies are based on these premises

- ☐ Children require a supportive and nurturing environment in which to grow and develop.
- ☐ Early care and education professionals recognize that children are first educated by the family, so they work to support the family as a whole.
- ☐ Cultural diversity impacts all areas of practice in early care and education. Professionals recognize that each family is unique in its structure, values, beliefs, traditions, and interactions. Professionals respect each family's worth and appreciate the richness of diversity that each family brings to the early care and education setting.
- ☐ Professionals in early care and education assume many roles (e.g., director, teacher, aide) and work in a variety of settings (e.g., family child care, center, Head Start).
- ☐ Professional development requires reflection on practices to identify strengths, recognize areas for future growth, and incorporate new learning experiences. Reflection heightens awareness of one's own performance and leads to personal change and growth.

The Bi-State Core Competencies are the result of collaboration

The core competencies represent the combined efforts of professionals from Kansas, Missouri, and the Kansas City metropolitan area to define standards for the field. The competencies were developed in conjunction with the following initiatives, which are working independently with stakeholder groups to establish plans for career-development systems.

- ☐ Professional Development Initiative for Early Care and Education in Kansas
- ☐ Opportunities in a Professional Education Network in Missouri
- ☐ Greater Kansas City Careers in Early Childhood Care and Education

Recognizing opportunities to pool resources, prevent duplication, and provide consistency, the initiatives collaborated to develop one set of core competencies to serve as the foundation for their career-development systems. Greater Kansas City Careers facilitated the collaboration between the two states by convening a Bi-State Core Competencies Conference Committee on a regular basis.

Members of the Core Competencies Committee represented diverse areas of the early childhood field, including early care and education providers (center, home, religious, Head Start); higher education faculty, administrators, and staff; federal and state agency personnel; early childhood agency/organization personnel; and community-based trainers.

The Core Competencies Committee met multiple times to develop the initial draft of the bi-state competencies; this draft was disseminated for review and feedback to approximately 6,000 professionals across the two states. The committee revised the competencies in response to reviewers' suggestions, producing the Summer 2000 Edition.

Content Area I: Child Growth and Development

Child Growth and Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Identifies basic developmental milestones of children.
- ☐ b. Recognizes that children learn and develop through play.
- ☐ c. Recognizes children's different personalities.
- ☐ d. Accepts cultural differences and the effects those differences may have on behavior and development.
- ☐ e. Addresses the requirements of children with different needs.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Identifies physical, cognitive, social/emotional, and communication developmental milestones of children.
- ☐ b. Recognizes different children's personalities and individual differences in development and their impact on children's needs in the program.
- ☐ c. Adapts care and education to children's changing needs.
- ☐ d. Recognizes risk factors, delays, or disabilities that may indicate a need for special services.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Explains current theories and describes ongoing research, in context.
- ☐ b. Explains physical, social/emotional, and cognitive differences of children, in context.
- ☐ c. Explains social and learning styles of children and various ways children learn, in context.
- ☐ d. Creates environments and experiences that affirm and respect cultural/linguistic diversity.
- ☐ e. Employs practices that support an inclusive philosophy.
- ☐ f. Uses appropriate resources and services for children with special needs.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Applies major theories and interrelationships across developmental areas.
- ☐ b. Integrates information on growth, development, and learning patterns of individuals and groups and applies to practice.
- ☐ c. Shares information with families about the general principles of child growth and development.
- ☐ d. Demonstrates knowledge of inclusive philosophy and practices and recognizes the range of development in young children.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on child growth and development.
- ☐ b. Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to child growth and development.

Content Area II: Learning Environment and Curriculum

Creating the Learning Environment & General Curriculum

Level 1

- ☐ a. Follows a daily schedule.
- ☐ b. Gives children choices.
- ☐ c. Supports and encourages children's participation in a variety of activities.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Maintains and monitors daily schedule.
- ☐ b. Provides an interesting and secure environment that encourages play, exploration, and learning, using space, relationships, materials, and routines as resources.
- ☐ c. Encourages children's learning through play.
- ☐ d. Arranges effective and appropriate learning centers.
- ☐ e. Selects materials appropriate to the developmental levels of all children.
- ☐ f. Provides space balanced between active and quiet, child-directed and teacher-directed, individual and group, indoor and outdoor.
- ☐ g. Uses materials that demonstrate acceptance of all children's gender, family, race, language, culture, and special needs.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Plans and adapts curricula and environments, including the selection of materials, appropriate to the developmental levels of all children.
- ☐ b. Uses appropriate materials, activities and strategies in an integrated curriculum that includes language arts, math, science, social studies, health, safety, nutrition, art, music, drama, and movement.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Creates learning environment using concrete manipulative materials, child choice, child decision-making, and play as a context for enhancing development and active learning.
- ☐ b. Ensures the environment facilitates learning in all developmental areas of children: cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional.
- ☐ c. Plans, implements, and evaluates learning environment and curriculum to maximize learning potential.
- ☐ d. Plans environment for children with special needs or learning styles.
- ☐ e. Considers multiple aspects of the learning environment in developing the curriculum.
- ☐ f. Takes advantage of opportunities to modify curriculum to build on children's activities.
- ☐ g. Develops strategies that allow children to play an important role in planning curriculum.
- ☐ h. Articulates the major theories of teaching and learning, including their logical and empirical foundations, and applies these theories to diverse learners.
- ☐ i. Chooses, uses, and evaluates appropriate technologies.
- ☐ j. Plans, implements, and evaluates appropriate materials, activities, and strategies in an integrated curriculum that includes language arts, math, science, social studies, health, safety, nutrition, art, music, drama, and movement.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Develops strategies that support children's role in planning curriculum.
- ☐ b. Designs curriculum and shares curriculum designs with others.
- ☐ c. Teaches others how to design curriculum.
- ☐ d. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on design of curriculum and environment.
- ☐ e. Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to early childhood care and education.

Promoting Physical Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Actively participates in children's activities.
- ☐ b. Interacts appropriately with children during physical activities.

Level 2
- ☐ a. Plans indoor and outdoor activities for large and small motor skills.
- ☐ b. Introduces sensory experiences to children.
- ☐ c. Leads activities for children with special needs.
- ☐ d. Incorporates a variety of equipment, activities, and opportunities to promote the physical development of children.
- ☐ e. Plans activities that integrate physical development with the arts and all curriculum areas.

Level 3
- ☐ a. Adapts activities for children with special needs.
- ☐ b. Integrates physical development with the arts and all curriculum areas.

Level 4
- ☐ a. Evaluates the effectiveness of physical development activities.
- ☐ b. Evaluates appropriateness of physical development activities for the individual child.
- ☐ c. Articulates the importance of perceptual motor development.

Level 5
- ☐ a. Explains how physical development and other areas of development interrelate.
- ☐ b. Uses knowledge of kinesthetic learning styles when teaching others.
- ☐ c. Designs and fosters alternative approaches to learning.
- ☐ d. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on promoting physical development.
- ☐ e. Works collaboratively with other agencies to research and communicate information about promoting physical development.

Promoting Cognitive Development

Level 1
- ☐ a. Encourages children to ask questions and actively listens to their responses.

Level 2
- ☐ a. Asks children relevant open-ended questions.
- ☐ b. Maintains adult's role as facilitator or partner in play.
- ☐ c. Encourages play to promote cognitive development.
- ☐ d. Provides activities and opportunities that encourage curiosity, exploration, and problem solving appropriate to the developmental levels and learning styles of children.
- ☐ e. Leads math, science, and nature exploration in response to children's emerging interests.
- ☐ f. Offers opportunities for emerging literacy.
- ☐ g. Offers learning opportunities reflecting the cultures represented in the community of the program.

Level 3
- ☐ a. Revisits learning activities with children so they can reflect and build on previous learning to develop and refine thinking skills.
- ☐ b. Helps children explore concepts such as space, time, shape, and quantity in meaningful ways.
- ☐ c. Plans and guides math, science, and nature exploration in response to children's emerging interests.
- ☐ d. Designs learning opportunities reflective of cultures represented in the community of the program.
- ☐ e. Explains cognitive development and the relationship of children's earliest experiences to their individual differences.
- ☐ f. Provides opportunities for children to organize, compare, and contrast thoughts, words, objects, and sensations and to solve problems.

Level 4
- ☐ a. Encourages the development of logico-mathematical knowledge of children by providing direct experiences.
- ☐ b. Varies teaching strategies to correspond to multiple learning strategies.
- ☐ c. Plans, implements, evaluates, and modifies curriculum to encourage children to construct knowledge.
- ☐ d. Plans activities to engage children in problem solving and constructing their own knowledge.

Level 5
- ☐ a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on promoting cognitive development.
- ☐ b. Works collaboratively with community resources and agencies to research and communicate information on cognitive development.

Promoting Language/ Communication Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Talks with children and stimulates conversation among children.
- ☐ b. Demonstrates realistic expectations for children's understanding and use of speech.
- ☐ c. Reads to children, modeling proper inflection, emphasis, and meaning.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Actively communicates with children.
- ☐ b. Helps children communicate with each other.
- ☐ c. Encourages and supports children's verbal interactions with others.
- ☐ d. Uses conversations to enrich and expand vocabulary.
- ☐ e. Provides opportunities and support to help children understand, acquire, and use verbal and nonverbal means of communicating thoughts and feelings.
- ☐ f. Uses a variety of songs, books, and games, including those from many cultures.
- ☐ g. Encourages the relationship between spoken and printed words.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Interacts with children in ways that facilitate the development of expressive language and thought.
- ☐ b. Uses concrete experiences and play to enhance and extend young children's language development and emerging literacy.
- ☐ c. Demonstrates an understanding of how children use language, as well as other forms of communication, at all ages and stages of development.
- ☐ d. Plans, implements, and evaluates language experiences and activities.
- ☐ e. Immerses children in a print-rich environment.
- ☐ f. Facilitates the relationship between spoken and printed words.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Uses ongoing assessment and evaluation to adapt and modify interactions with children to meet the specific language development needs of individual children.
- ☐ b. Designs curriculum consistent with current theories of language use and language acquisition.
- ☐ c. Recognizes and responds to the general warning signs of communication/language delays and communication/ language disorders for children of various ages.
- ☐ d. Informs others, including families, about the importance of adult-child and child-child interactions in children's language development.
- ☐ e. Exposes children to various symbols of literacy.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Collaborates with language specialists to modify and adapt curriculum activities and experiences to meet individual language and literacy development needs of each child.
- ☐ b. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on emerging trends in language acquisition, development, and emerging literacy.

Promoting Social Development

Level 1

- ☐ a. Engages in everyday conversation with children.
- ☐ b. Treats children as individuals with their own strengths and needs.
- ☐ c. Recognizes that periods of stress, separation, and transition may affect children's social development.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Helps children learn to communicate and get along with others.
- ☐ b. Models recognition and expression of feelings.
- ☐ c. Encourages feelings of empathy and mutual respect among children and adults.
- ☐ d. Helps children feel valued as members of the group.
- ☐ e. Helps children through periods of stress, separation, and transition.
- ☐ f. Helps children identify positively with the events and experiences of their lives.
- ☐ g. Emphasizes cooperation in games and activities.
- ☐ h. Provides many opportunities for children to participate in cooperative play.
- ☐ i. Supports children's developing awareness of the individual as a member of a family and of an ethnic or social group and is sensitive to different cultural values and expectations.

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Level 3

- ☐ a. Guides children in expressing their feelings and asserting themselves in positive ways.
- ☐ b. Guides children through problem solving and conflict resolution interactions.
- ☐ c. Encourages children to choose activities, timing, and playmates.
- ☐ d. Helps children learn empathy and respect for the rights and possessions of others.
- ☐ e. Plans activities incorporating multiple types of play (e.g., socio-dramatic, functional, or constructive play).
- ☐ f. Intervenes when necessary to help children develop socially.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Provides a meaningful curriculum emphasizing social skills, relationships and friendships.
- ☐ b. Works to create a community in the classroom and includes children who may be isolated.
- ☐ c. Develops and implements strategies that encourage children's social development in various roles such as leadership.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on promoting social development.
- ☐ b. Communicates to others the process for developing curriculum that promotes social development.

Promoting Creative Expression

Level 1

- ☐ a. Values process as more important than product.
- ☐ b. Encourages individuality, including unique individual expression.
- ☐ c. Accepts cultural differences that may affect children's ways of expressing themselves creatively.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Emphasizes the process of creating instead of the end product.
- ☐ b. Allows time for spontaneous and extended play.
- ☐ c. Provides unstructured materials.
- ☐ d. Encourages children to express their creative abilities.
- ☐ e. Models and encourages creativity through language, music, dramatic play, and art.
- ☐ f. Develops curriculum and activities to promote creative expression.
- ☐ g. Provides opportunities that encourage children to play with sound, rhythm, language, materials, space, and ideas in individual ways.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Ensures that all children have access to opportunities that allow for individual creative expression.
- ☐ b. Uses technology to support creative expression.
- ☐ c. Modifies curriculum and experiences to promote the creative expression of all children.
- ☐ d. Develops and implements creative and aesthetic activities for children in the learning environment.
- ☐ e. Identifies developmental stages in domains.
- ☐ f. Views community as a resource for creative and aesthetic experiences.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Demonstrates leadership in establishing partnerships with community organizations that stimulate creative and aesthetic experiences.
- ☐ b. Encourages and integrates creative expression throughout curriculum.
- ☐ c. Shows respect for creative expression through appropriate documentation and exhibition.
- ☐ d. Informs families about the importance of individual creative expression.
- ☐ e. Values creative expression as necessary to the development of the whole child.
- ☐ f. Using specific examples, explains how children represent their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through creative outlets.
- ☐ g. Supports each child's creative development by adapting time, space, and materials to meet the needs and interests of individual children.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Communicates the theoretical concepts underlying the ways children use art to express themselves.
- ☐ b. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on promoting creative experience.
- ☐ c. Exposes children to and helps develop their appreciation for creative and aesthetic experiences in their community.
- ☐ d. Identifies and uses specialists in artistic disciplines to incorporate the building blocks of each art form into the program.

Content Area III: Child Observation and Assessment

Child Observation and Assessment

Level 1

- ☐ a. Acknowledges that children develop at their own rate.
- ☐ b. Assists with collection of information about each child's development.
- ☐ c. Maintains confidentiality between the program and the child's family regarding each child's observation and assessment.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Identifies various ways to get to know each child as an individual, including strengths, needs, interests, families, and life situation.
- ☐ b. Collects and organizes information about each child, such as collecting samples of the child's work, recording anecdotal notes, and keeping accurate records.
- ☐ c. Follows appropriate procedures of child observation.
- ☐ d. Communicates observation in written and oral form.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Appreciates and accommodates the range of development and skills among children.
- ☐ b. Continually observes children, analyzes and evaluates findings, and applies this knowledge to practice.
- ☐ c. Applies basic elements of child development theory to observation.
- ☐ d. Selects appropriate assessment methods.
- ☐ e. Explains the importance of ongoing assessment to staff and families.
- ☐ f. Recognizes environmental factors that may place children at risk.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Plans for communicating observation to families.
- ☐ b. Communicates assessment results to families, both authentic and standardized, in a clear and supportive manner.

- ☐ c. Plans culturally diverse, gender-equitable assessment.
- ☐ d. Develops and implements individual plans.
- ☐ e. When appropriate, refers children for further evaluation.
- ☐ f. Works cooperatively with assessment and health care teams for children with special needs.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on assessment.
- ☐ b. Communicates major theories, research, and issues relevant to observation and assessment.
- ☐ c. Establishes criteria, procedures, and documentation methods for assessment.
- ☐ d. Informs the field how to support children's self-reflection.

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Content Area IV: Families and Communities

Relationships with Families

Level 1

- ☐ a. Respects the family's role as primary educator.
- ☐ b. Establishes positive communication and relationships with families.
- ☐ c. Acknowledges the varying structures of children's families.
- ☐ d. Accepts differences in children.
- ☐ e. Follows rules of confidentiality.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Invites family members to play an active role in their child's education, recognizing that families' attitudes influence children's ability and interest in learning.
- ☐ b. Creates and maintains open, friendly, and cooperative relations with families and communicates daily events.
- ☐ c. Provides opportunities for families to share skills and talents.
- ☐ d. Supports children's relationships with their families.
- ☐ e. Recognizes stress factors affecting families.
- ☐ f. Respects and supports cultural differences and diverse family structures.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Communicates with families about curriculum, an individual child's progress, and developmental growth.
- ☐ b. Applies the family-centered approach to early intervention.
- ☐ c. Strives to ensure that community diversity and cultures are reflected in program.
- ☐ d. Works effectively with families from a variety of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- ☐ e. Provides families with appropriate referrals to community resources.
- ☐ f. Plans and conducts family conferences.
- ☐ g. Implements effective conflict resolution techniques with families.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Shares knowledge of general child development with families.
- ☐ b. Practices a strengths-based, family-centered early intervention approach.
- ☐ c. Involves and supports families in development of Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- ☐ d. Explains how families within many cultures are different and have different family structures.
- ☐ e. Articulates the various theories of family systems and the effect of stress/crisis on families.
- ☐ f. Assesses, plans, and conducts activities for family support and participation.
- ☐ g. Articulates and applies theories of family development and dynamics within pluralistic cultures.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on relationships with families.
- ☐ b. Accesses appropriate formalized family assessment and intervention resources for diverse families.
- ☐ c. Involves family members as decision makers in programs.

Use of Community Resources

Level 1

- ☐ a. Values and uses community resources that support and assist families.
- ☐ b. Recognizes volunteers as a valuable community resource.
- ☐ c. Works cooperatively and appropriately with volunteers.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Identifies community agencies providing assistance for children and families and makes appropriate referrals.
- ☐ b. Helps families obtain clear and understandable information about their children's disabilities and information about the family's legal right to services.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Uses community resources to support families.
- ☐ b. Assists with public awareness activities to inform the community about early care and education services.
- ☐ c. Promotes public awareness about early care and education by educating consumers.
- ☐ d. Assists with community outreach efforts.
- ☐ e. Participates in community needs assessments.
- ☐ f. Works effectively with volunteers if needed.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Develops relationships with community resources and provides families with resource information.
- ☐ b. Works collaboratively with other community resources providing services to children and families.
- ☐ c. Implements and supports volunteer programs, if needed.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Works collaboratively with agencies to meet the needs of families in the community.
- ☐ b. Works to develop resources in the community.
- ☐ c. Represents the early childhood field in collaborative community endeavors.
- ☐ d. Investigates issues surrounding the uses of volunteerism in early childhood programs.
- ☐ e. Develops and maintains relationships with other disciplines and specialties in related fields.

Content Area V: Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Knowledge of Regulations

Level 1

- ☐ a. Releases children only to authorized persons.
- ☐ b. Demonstrates basic pediatric first aid and CPR.
- ☐ c. Follows regulations regarding health and safety.
- ☐ d. Maintains emergency supplies and equipment.
- ☐ e. Carries out disaster plans and drills.
- ☐ f. Verbalizes and adheres to ratio requirements.
- ☐ g. Explains and performs the mandated reporter role for child abuse and neglect.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Ensures safety equipment, such as smoke detector and fire extinguisher, is in place and operable.
- ☐ b. Demonstrates the use of safety equipment.
- ☐ c. Uses diagrams, pictures, and words understood by children and adults to post instructions for emergency procedures.
- ☐ d. Practices procedures for fires and other emergencies, including safety procedures for children with disabilities.
- ☐ e. Identifies and reports problems regarding staff/child ratios.
- ☐ f. Follows regulations regarding inclusion.
- ☐ g. Assists in self-assessments of facility for licensing and accreditation.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Verbalizes and adheres to emergency, illness, and injury procedures.
- ☐ b. Informs others of emergency procedures.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Uses code of ethics to monitor violations of regulations.
- ☐ b. Articulates and adheres to laws pertaining to children and families.
- ☐ c. Participates in the revision of regulations and standards to meet program's needs.
- ☐ d. Designs and documents emergency procedures.
- ☐ e. Develops/documents contingency plans to meet ratio requirements in all situations.
- ☐ f. Assesses how regulations affect the quality of the program.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Conducts self-assessments of facility for licensing and accreditation.
- ☐ b. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on safety.
- ☐ c. Participates on an accreditation visitation team.

Environmental Safety

Level 1

- ☐ a. Maintains all areas, following regulations for safety.
- ☐ b. Selects safe toys.
- ☐ c. Actively supervises and interacts with children to ensure safety both indoors and outdoors.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Describes and maintains a safe environment, including equipment and toys, to prevent and reduce injuries.
- ☐ b. Adapts the indoor and outdoor environments to maximize the independence of children with special needs.
- ☐ c. Teaches simple safety precautions and rules to children and enforces rules consistently.
- ☐ d. Keeps informed about and shares safety information and resources with families.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Designs and assesses safe environments inside and outside.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Advocates for environmental safety.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Participates in community groups to develop and implement strategies for improving the environmental safety of facilities serving children.
- ☐ b. Identifies opportunities to fund environmental safety improvements.
- ☐ c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on environmental safety.

Responding to Health Needs of Children

Level 1

- ☐ a. Practices appropriate hand-washing techniques.
- ☐ b. Helps children practice appropriate hand-washing techniques.
- ☐ c. Practices safe diapering procedures.
- ☐ d. Implements practices to avoid/control blood-borne pathogens to ensure safety of adults and children.
- ☐ e. Responds to children's injuries and fear of injuries, documents any injuries and notifies families, while assuring the comfort and care of other children.
- ☐ f. Checks children daily for signs of illness and possible signs of abuse and neglect.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Promotes good health and provides an environment that contributes to the prevention of illness.
- ☐ b. Seeks information on and demonstrates good practice for children with health care needs.
- ☐ c. Plans and guides self-help activities.
- ☐ d. Follows procedures to avoid transmission of communicable diseases.
- ☐ e. Follows instructions for administration of medicine and approved medical treatments, including related documentation.
- ☐ f. Identifies, documents, and reports suspected emotional distress, abuse, and neglect of children in an immediate and appropriate way.
- ☐ g. Recognizes children's interest in bodies and integrates interest into curriculum.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Designs and assesses sanitary environments inside and outside.
- ☐ b. Models and provides direction on sanitation.
- ☐ c. Talks with and provides resource information to families about health.
- ☐ d. Identifies causes of stress and trauma and assesses children's resiliency.
- ☐ e. Plans and implements safe field trips.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Designs and documents sanitation procedures.
- ☐ b. Works with health care professionals in community to ensure that the needs of the children are met.
- ☐ c. Establishes procedures for documentation and notification of suspected abuse and neglect.
- ☐ d. Helps others (families, staff) recognize and report abuse and neglect.
- ☐ e. Designs and implements curriculum activities emphasizing healthy bodies, healthy lifestyles, and a healthy environment.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Collaborates with community groups to identify health issues or concerns, including sanitation.
- ☐ b. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on the health needs of all children.

Nutrition

Level 1

- ☐ a. Practices safe food handling and observes general sanitation practices.
- ☐ b. Maintains sanitary environments.
- ☐ c. Monitors eating habits to ensure a healthy diet, including the need of children to eat frequently.
- ☐ d. Recognizes health hazards in meals (choking, allergies, etc.) and takes steps to prevent dangerous situations.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Provides appropriate food and snacks in a pleasant environment.
- ☐ b. Communicates with families about the food children need and prefer.
- ☐ c. Plans and guides cooking experiences with children.
- ☐ d. Teaches children about nutrition.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Recognizes nutritional concerns.
- ☐ b. Plans and evaluates menus.
- ☐ c. Includes foods from diverse cultures.
- ☐ d. Plans activities in which children learn to make healthy food choices.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Assesses program's nutritional plan and adapts practices accordingly.
- ☐ b. Coordinates food activities with cultural calendar.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on nutrition.
- ☐ b. Collaborates with community groups to identify issues or concerns.
- ☐ c. Advocates for policies and procedures that affect the nutritional welfare of the broader community.

Content Area VI: Interactions with Children

Providing Individual Guidance

Level 1

- ☐ a. Avoids actions that would cause physical and emotional harm.
- ☐ b. Provides appropriate supervision.
- ☐ c. Interacts in a manner reflecting respect for self and others.
- ☐ d. Cares for children based on positive, warm, nurturing relationships.
- ☐ e. Uses positive behavior guidance.
- ☐ f. Addresses problem behavior or situation, rather than labeling the child.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Modifies play no longer appropriate for the learning environment.
- ☐ b. Establishes and communicates limits for acceptable behavior.
- ☐ c. Responds to children's behavior in ways that encourage self-control.
- ☐ d. Provides a supportive environment in which children can learn and practice appropriate and acceptable behaviors as individuals and as a group.
- ☐ e. Follows a variety of positive direct and indirect guidance methods and avoids negative methods.
- ☐ f. Provides an environment that helps each child to know, accept, and take pride in himself or herself and to develop a sense of independence.
- ☐ g. Builds a trusting relationship with children, providing physical and emotional security.
- ☐ h. Uses strategies to assist children in learning to express emotions in positive ways, solve problems, and make decisions.
- ☐ i. Communicates with families regarding areas of concern, developing cooperative strategies to manage problems.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Demonstrates realistic expectations about children's attention spans, interests, social abilities, and physical needs.
- ☐ b. Helps children establish classroom rules.
- ☐ c. Identifies strategies that involve children in establishing guidelines and limits for behavior.
- ☐ d. Relates guidance practices to knowledge of children's personalities and levels of development.
- ☐ e. Recognizes and responds to individual behavioral problems related to developmental or emotional stress.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Adapts the learning environment and curriculum to minimize potential challenging behaviors.
- ☐ b. Applies theories of child development to improve child guidance techniques.
- ☐ c. Uses child assessment to individualize and improve child guidance.
- ☐ d. Demonstrates knowledge of instructional and guidance procedures for integrating children with and without disabilities.
- ☐ e. Collaborates with families to develop individually appropriate expectations for children's behavior.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Develops written policies for effective child guidance.
- ☐ b. Articulates the principles for intervention and conflict resolution in children's play and learning.
- ☐ c. Develops individual guidance plans, accessing relevant professionals for support as needed.
- ☐ d. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on individual guidance.

Enhancing Group Experiences

Level 1

- ☐ a. Provides organization and flexibility when working with children.
- ☐ b. Handles activities and changes in schedule with clear directions and patience.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Uses prepared yet flexible plans.

- ☐ b. Leads activities in a positive, relaxed, and pleasant atmosphere.
- ☐ c. Alerts children to changes in activities or routines well in advance.
- ☐ d. Builds a trusting relationship with children as a foundation for positive guidance and self-discipline.
- ☐ e. Anticipates and defuses disruptive behavior.
- ☐ f. Is aware of each child's limitations and abilities, uses guidance techniques accordingly, and explains rules at the child's level of understanding.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Provides experiences that engage children and respond to their interests.
- ☐ b. Plans and guides activities to promote cooperative play.
- ☐ c. Plans and guides activities that promote children's supportive relationships with peers, family, professional staff, and community.
- ☐ d. Supervises overlapping activities so children can use time effectively.
- ☐ e. Helps children use time effectively in small or large group work.
- ☐ f. Encourages positive relationships, communication, and guidance strategies, including problem solving and negotiation within the learning environment.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Applies theories of child development to group management techniques.
- ☐ b. Uses child assessment to individualize and improve group management.
- ☐ c. Evaluates and adapts group experiences to ensure that all children are learning.
- ☐ d. Integrates children of all abilities into the group, following appropriate instructional and guidance procedures.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Develops cooperative group skills that focus on working in small groups, negotiating, compromising, and problem solving.
- ☐ b. Designs and develops new cooperative group activities based on current research and curriculum design.
- ☐ c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory and research on group experiences.

Content Area VII: Program Planning and Development

Program Planning and Evaluation

Level 1

- ☐ a. Behaves as a responsible staff member and participates in the program team.
- ☐ b. Keeps appropriate records.
- ☐ c. Complies with program policies and licensing.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Supports the program mission statement.
- ☐ b. Organizes, plans, keeps records, and communicates effectively.
- ☐ c. Develops unit plans and curriculum for the classroom.
- ☐ d. Selects appropriate equipment and material for practice.
- ☐ e. Writes objectives and goals for activities.
- ☐ f. Uses available resources to ensure an effective operation.
- ☐ g. Assists in gathering information for evaluation.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Verbalizes the relationship between the program's philosophy and daily practice.
- ☐ b. Plans parent orientations and education programs.
- ☐ c. Plans and acquires appropriate equipment and materials for the program.
- ☐ d. Participates in strategic planning and goal setting for the program.
- ☐ e. Conducts program observations.
- ☐ f. Recognizes the importance of evaluation, assisting in evaluating program's effectiveness.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Applies knowledge of federal, state, and local legislation, regulations, and professional standards to provide healthy and safe practices for all children.
- ☐ b. Develops and implements program policies.
- ☐ c. Develops curriculum for program.
- ☐ d. Manages program resources (financial, personnel, time) effectively.
- ☐ e. Demonstrates the ability to organize and operate various types of early care and education programs.
- ☐ f. Communicates effectively with board/advisory groups.
- ☐ g. Identifies evaluation methods and understands their limitations.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on program planning and evaluation.
- ☐ b. Develops public relations strategies to establish the program in the community.
- ☐ c. Ensures the program meets diversity needs and reflects inclusion of children, families, staff, and community partners.
- ☐ d. Identifies legal issues related to early care and education and collaborates with community groups to interpret them.

Personnel Management

Level 1

- ☐ a. Works effectively with support staff, volunteers, and professionals.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Supports other staff members and professionals.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Values and works to strengthen the program's team of staff, administrators, and volunteers.
- ☐ b. Provides effective lines of communication among staff and administrators.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Plans for, recruits, orients, supervises, and evaluates staff.
- ☐ b. Plans for, recruits, orients, and supervises volunteers.
- ☐ c. Plans and carries out staff development opportunities.
- ☐ d. Supervises student teachers and practicum students.
- ☐ e. Provides strong leadership and visionary direction.

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Level 5

- ☐ a. Develops staff recruitment, selection, and retention program.
- ☐ b. Designs and implements staff job descriptions and evaluation forms and procedures.
- ☐ c. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on personnel management.

Financial Management

Level 1

- ☐ a. Performs basic math computations and makes basic money transactions.
- ☐ b. Follows bookkeeping procedures.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Utilizes generally accepted business practices.
- ☐ b. Operates within budget.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Assists in planning budget.
- ☐ b. Conducts and maintains the inventory of supplies, materials, and equipment.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Plans, reports on, and maintains budget.
- ☐ b. Develops fee structure.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Develops and implements fiscal business plan.
- ☐ b. Matches expenditures with program philosophies.
- ☐ c. Develops marketing plan.
- ☐ d. Seeks additional funding opportunities.
- ☐ e. Writes grant proposals.
- ☐ f. Articulates, analyzes, evaluates, and applies current theory, research, and policy on financial management.

Content Area VIII: Professional Development and Leadership

Displaying Professionalism in Practice

Level 1

- ☐ a. Enjoys working with children and models a positive attitude.
- ☐ b. Exhibits good hygiene and personal appearance.
- ☐ c. Demonstrates good work habits.
- ☐ d. Supports and complies with regulations and licensing standards.
- ☐ e. Values reflection on teaching and learning, using staff interaction, training/education, and journals.
- ☐ f. Is aware of the professional code of ethics for early care and education and its main topics.
- ☐ g. Behaves ethically, maintaining confidentiality and impartiality.
- ☐ h. Shows commitment to the program's goals.

Level 2

- ☐ a. Manages demands of personal and professional commitments.
- ☐ b. Uses problem-solving skills in program.
- ☐ c. Interacts in a manner reflecting value of self and respect for others.
- ☐ d. Performs well as team member.
- ☐ e. Promotes quality in child-care services.
- ☐ f. Demonstrates a commitment to professional code of ethics.

Level 3

- ☐ a. Routinely engages in reflection of teaching practices and the behavior of children.
- ☐ b. Is familiar with current trends in early childhood education.
- ☐ c. Articulates professional code of ethics.
- ☐ d. Recognizes potentially unethical practices.
- ☐ e. Participates in program decision-making.
- ☐ f. Makes program decisions based on professional standards.
- ☐ g. Describes relationship between theory and practice.

Level 4

- ☐ a. Participates in group problem solving of ethical dilemmas
- ☐ b. Articulates personal philosophy of early childhood education based on knowledge of child development and best practices.
- ☐ c. Articulates and uses a professional code of ethics for making professional decisions.
- ☐ d. Recognizes causes and symptoms of "burnout" and develops strategies to prevent it.
- ☐ e. Evaluates current trends in early childhood education and revises practice as appropriate.

Level 5

- ☐ a. Initiates and mediates group problem solving of ethical dilemmas.
- ☐ b. Keeps up-to-date on research and policy relevant to early care and education.
- ☐ c. Revises practice according to research.
- ☐ d. Advocates for children and families.

Ongoing Professional Growth

Level 1
- ☐ a. Seeks out knowledge to improve practice.
- ☐ b. Evaluates his or her own performance and sets goals to advance knowledge of field.

Level 2
- ☐ a. Is aware of professional resources.
- ☐ b. Takes advantage of opportunities to improve competence, both for personal and professional growth and for the benefit of children and families.
- ☐ c. Accepts advice and constructive criticism to improve practice.
- ☐ d. Actively participates in professional association.
- ☐ e. Follows accreditation standards.

Level 3
- ☐ a. Uses professional resources to improve practice.
- ☐ b. Seeks out professional relationships to enhance professional growth (e.g., securing a mentor).
- ☐ c. Develops and carries out a personal professional development plan.
- ☐ d. Works toward credentials, degrees, and/or program accreditation.

Level 4
- ☐ a. Articulates a professional value system and implements ongoing professional self-reflection.
- ☐ b. Actively participates in career development.
- ☐ c. Integrates knowledge of historical, philosophical, psychological, and social foundations of education, including early childhood education, into planning and decision-making.
- ☐ d. Serves as a mentor.

Level 5
- ☐ a. Explores models of professional development and evaluates/assesses opportunities to promote others' professional growth.
- ☐ b. Designs staff development opportunities for colleagues.
- ☐ c. Disseminates knowledge at local, state, regional, and national conferences.
- ☐ d. Identifies change process and develops practices to support professional growth.
- ☐ e. Recognizes the differences in adult and early childhood learning styles and applies knowledge to practice.

Leadership and Advocacy

Level 1
- ☐ a. Recognizes professional behavior.

Level 2
- ☐ a. Demonstrates support for licensed care.
- ☐ b. Models professional behavior.

Level 3
- ☐ a. Identifies community needs that affect children.
- ☐ b. Exhibits knowledge of advocacy issues.
- ☐ c. Initiates problem solving and conflict resolution for program and staff.

Level 4
- ☐ a. Justifies practice to families, administrators, and colleagues.
- ☐ b. Describes the legislative process, including legal and advocacy issues, that impact children and their families and communicates this information to others.
- ☐ c. Explains how government policies affect early childhood care and education.
- ☐ d. Holds office in a professional association.

Level 5
- ☐ a. Serves as a spokesperson to the community and the media on early care and education issues.
- ☐ b. Develops and carries out advocacy plan.
- ☐ c. Provides a work culture that fosters staff initiative to solve problems and resolve conflict.
- ☐ d. Serves on professional boards and committees.

Professional Development Record

Suggestions for using this record

Keep your Professional Development Record in a safe place at your home or place of work.

After attending a training session, transfer the information from the training certificate you receive into your Professional Development Record. You and your employer should each keep a file of your training certificates. The certificates and this record may be used to document annual training clock hours.

Share information in this record with your child care licensing surveyor during his/her visit.

Keep track of what is in your Professional Development Record. Look at it often. During the year, plan to attend training on several different topics.

When you have filled the Professional Development Record, a new one may be requested from either the Metropolitan Council on Child Care at the Mid-America Regional Council (816/474-4240) or the Professional Development Initiative for Early Care and Education in Kansas at the Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (800/678-2548).

Content Area I: Child Growth and Development

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Content Area II: Learning Environment and Curriculum

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Content Area III: Child Observation and Assessment

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Content Area IV: Families and Communities

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Content Area V: Health, Safety, and Nutrition

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Content Area VI: Interactions with Children

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Content Area VII: Program Planning and Development

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Content Area VIII: Professional Development and Leadership

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